

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PRAGUE 01130 041619Z
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PRAGUE 1130

NODIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIN, US, CZ
SUBJ: CLAIMS/GOLD

REF: A) STATE 111035, B) PRAGUE 1102

1. REF A WAS MOST INTERESTING. \$35 MILLION FIGURE MERRIGAN SUGGESTED AS ACCEPTABLE IS, OF COURSE, ONE WE HAD PREVIOUSLY SUGGESTED. SEEKING A LUMP SUM PAYMENT WOULD CLEARLY MAKE THE POLITICAL DECISION THE GOC FACES MORE DIFFICULT, ALTHOUGH CONCEIVABLY A LUMP SUM MIGHT BE ACCEPTABLE IF IT WERE LINKED WITH AN APPARENT CONCESSION ON OUR PART ON THE TOTAL AMOUNT. TO USE THAT TACTIC WOULD PRESUMABLY REQUIRE INITIALLY SEEKING A FIGURE HIGHER THAN \$35 MILLION -- BUT AS I SAID IN REF B, THERE IS NOTHING SACRED ABOUT THAT FIGURE.

2. AS FOR MERRIGAN'S PROPOSED NEW STRATEGY (PARA 5, REF A), SUCH A PROPOSAL MIGHT BE ADVANCED AS A NEGOTIATING TACTIC, BUT IT IS CLEARLY NO MORE ACCEPTABLE IN PRINCIPLE TO THE GOC THAN STRAIGHTFORWARD VESTING WOULD BE. DOING "SOMETHING", HOWEVER, WOULD HELP OUR IMAGE AT HOME. I AM SURE THE DEPARTMENT SEES AS WELL AS WE DO THE VARIOUS PRACTICAL PROBLEMS THAT WOULD BE INVOLVED SHOULD THE MERRIGAN PROPOSAL BE IMPLEMENTED.

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3. I CONTINUE TO THINK THAT FROM A NEGOTIATING AND PUBLIC/CONGRESSIONAL RELATIONS POSITION, WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT IS TO GET ON RECORD AS SOON AS POSSIBLE WITH HAVING TAKEN THE INITIATIVE TO PUT A REASONABLE PROPOSAL ON THE TABLE. TO THE EXTENT POSSIBLE WE SHOULD PUT AND KEEP THE BALL IN THE GOC COURT. CONTINUED INACTION

CAN ONLY GIVE FURTHER AMMUNITION TO THE DEPARTMENT'S
CRITICS AT HOME AND PROVIDE AMMUNITION FOR GOC ANTI-
AMERICAN PROPAGANDA, WHILE DOING NOTHING TO ASSIST THE
AGING AMERICAN CLAIMANTS.
BYRNE

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